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Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

TEMP Max 32 | Min 22 | Humidity 65% Scattered thunderstorms Sensex 74,775 | Nifty 23,547 | Gold 1,56,010 | Silver 2,66,229 | Dollar 94.76 | Euro 110.83 | GBP 127.59

UNHEALTHY PALATE

People in state consuming fewer calories than before even as fat intake remains way higher than national average

PAGE 2

PLASTICKY FEELING

77,000 kg of banned plastic items under more than 42,000 cases booked between June 2025 and now

PAGE 5

Pressure to appear perfect, grab engagement by hook or crook, gain more views or likes making youngsters push the limits; with the narrative controlling identities, real selves are taking the back seat

CONTENT IS BLING

● Vulnerability hidden away behind memes ● 'Brain-rot' humour is a thing

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With the city tightly in the grip of new-age culture with many turning to social media hot takes, youth culture is shaped online before it trickles down to reality. Most youngsters skip the ordinary content online and go beyond self improvement, sarcastic humour or even aesthetics, to create identities and narratives that they can control. BM spoke to content creators to understand what drives young identities online.

In the field of fitness, content creators BM spoke to say, there is a constant pressure to appear disciplined, productive, attractive or emotionally detached in order to achieve great physique and financial security. This mindset narrative governs the lives of many youngsters as they navigate the city's hyper online culture.

According to ACSM certified trainer, INFS transformation coach and fitness influencer Akshay Tamra, whose Instagram handlie is akshay_tamra_fitness, modern fitness culture now exists somewhere in the middle of online performance and genuine wellbeing. "The modern gym culture is a mix of genuine health goals along with social self image. Most go to gym for practical reasons like improving strength, reducing stress or sleeping better and maintaining good health. But Instagram and YouTube have transformed fitness and churned it into self-branding. Now physiques are displayed as a symbol of success, social value, discipline and attractiveness," said Tamra.

"When engagement doesn't take off, it affects mental health. You start obsessing over what will resonate with the audience instead of just being yourself. We are more connected than ever, but we are also creating versions of ourselves that aren't always real

—Ronald, college student

He explained that young men are trying to build confidence around visible self control

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 >>

Danger lurks at home

City logs nearly 2 domestic abuse cases daily; NCRB 2024 data shows 878 dowry complaints too

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Bengaluru recorded 619 cases of cruelty by husband or relatives in 2024, according to NCRB city crime data, which works out to nearly two domestic violence cases every day in the city. The figures place Bengaluru among the higher reporting metro cities in India for domestic cruelty cases, indicating a steady daily flow of complaints being registered throughout the year.

In comparison, Delhi recorded 4,647 cases, the highest among all cities in the dataset. Hyderabad reported 1,085 cases, while Mumbai logged 855 cases and Chennai recorded 104 cases, placing Bengaluru above several southern metros but below major northern cities in overall volume.

The city also registered 878 cases under the Dowry Prohibition Act, making it one of the higher reporting metros in this category. In addition, Bengaluru recorded 25 dowry death cases, higher than several southern cities such as Chennai, Kochi, and Coimbatore, where no such cases were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 >>

THINGS TO DO

01 Drama showcase

Ranga Shankara has announced its June 2026 play schedule, featuring a diverse mix of Kannada, Hindi, English and Tamil productions by theatre groups from across India. The month-long programme includes acclaimed works such as Vyuha Mudra, Maya Dweepa, Draupadi Helthavale, Bali: The Sacrifice and Shurpanakhi, alongside children's theatre and multilingual performances. **Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: June 2 to June 30;**

02 Denim fest returns

Nexus Select Malls in Bengaluru has launched the fourth edition of the Denim & Sneaker Fest with a live concert by Yerd Plate Dose. The festival will feature streetwear collections, sneaker drops, shopping offers, giveaways and immersive fashion experiences across the mall. **Where: Nexus Mall, Koramangala; When: Running till June 15**

03 Poetic voices

The latest edition of Tuesdays with the Bard at Urban Solace will feature poets and educators Roopa John and Selvarani Paulraj, who will discuss poetry, language and self-expression. **Where: Urban Solace, Ulsoor; When: June 2, 7.30 pm to 9 pm**

04 Odissi spectacle

Odissi dancer Madhulita Mohapatra and the Nrityantar Dance Ensemble will present Draupadi's Mahabharata … the epic that began with her, reimagining the epic through Draupadi's perspective. **Where: Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield; When: June 7, 3.30 pm to 7.30 pm**

05 Visual legacy

What India Learned to See, From Battala to the Ravi Varma Press and Beyond, presented by the Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation, explores how printmaking shaped modern India's visual culture. **Where: Gallery G, Ashok Nagar; When: May 31**

Karnataka's unhealthy plate: Fewer calories and more fat

State's wellness picture darkens, shrinking energy intake contrasts elevated oil consumption, signalling a hidden nutrition epidemic of lifestyle disorders across the region, analysts say

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Karnataka may be heading towards a silent nutrition crisis hidden behind its economic success story. New data from the Nutritional Intake in India Report 2023–24 shows that people in the state are consuming fewer calories than before, even as fat intake remains significantly higher than the national average, raising concerns among doctors about rising lifestyle diseases, hidden malnutrition, and worsening dietary imbalance.

The figures reveal a striking trend. Average daily calorie intake in rural Karnataka fell sharply from 2,327 kcal per person in 2022–23 to 2,202 kcal in 2023–24. Urban intake also declined from 2,357 kcal to 2,289 kcal. The fall is steeper than the national average decline, suggesting Karnataka's food consumption patterns are changing faster than in much of the country.

However, while calorie intake is falling, fat consumption is not. Rural Karnataka's fat intake actually increased from 65.1 grams to 65.6 grams per person per day, while urban fat intake remained extremely high at 71.7 grams despite a slight dip from 72.8 grams. Both rural and urban Karnataka continue to consume more fat than the all-India average. Doctors say the numbers point to a dangerous nutritional imbalance emerging in one of urban India's fastest-growing states. "People are eating less traditional food but consuming more processed, fat-rich food," health experts warn. Bengaluru's rapidly expanding IT and services sector has pushed lakhs of people into sedentary lifestyles, where physical activity is declining even as dependence on restaurant food, packaged snacks, delivery apps, and high-oil diets rises steadily.

Medical experts say this combination could become a public health time bomb. Reduced calorie intake does not automatically mean healthier living. In many cases, people are replacing balanced meals with calorie-dense but nutrient-poor food loaded with oils, sugar, and refined ingredients. This increases the risk of obesity, diabetes, fatty liver disease, hypertension, and heart disease, even when overall calorie intake appears lower on paper.

The trend is particularly worrying because Karnataka is already witnessing rising cases of lifestyle diseases in urban centres. Public health specialists say the state may now be facing the "double burden" of malnutrition, where people are simultaneously overweight and nutritionally deficient. In simple terms, many may be consuming enough fat and junk food while still lacking iron, protein, vitamins, and essential micronutrients. The rural numbers are also causing concern. Experts warn that falling calorie intake outside cities may not be linked to dieting or fitness trends, but to rising food prices and economic pressure. Inflation in pulses, edible oils, vegetables, and milk may be forcing poorer households to cut back on nutritious food consumption. If prolonged, this could weaken immunity, reduce productivity, and worsen anaemia among women and children.

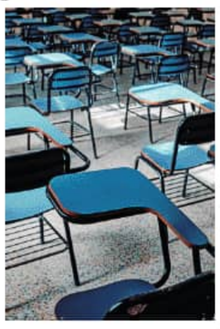
What makes Karnataka's situation stand out is the contrast between prosperity and nutrition. Despite being home to India's tech capital and one of the country's strongest economies, the state's calorie intake is slipping even as dependence on fat-heavy diets remains high.

Study shows residents consuming reduced energy intake, while dietary lipids remain above the national benchmark, prompting alarm among specialists regarding rising metabolic disorders across urban centres

Doctors say the bigger danger is that the crisis may not be immediately visible. Unlike starvation, hidden nutritional imbalance builds slowly through obesity, diabetes, fatigue, cardiovascular disease, and metabolic disorders. Karnataka's latest food consumption data, experts warn, may be the first visible sign of a much deeper lifestyle and public health problem unfolding quietly across the state.

Classrooms go fully face-logged

Students in government pre-university colleges will soon have to mark attendance through facial recognition, as the Department of Pre-University Education plans to make the system mandatory by the end of June. The initiative will be rolled out first for second-year PU students and later extended to first-year students. The department has already trained two lecturers from each college as master trainers, who will in turn train other staff. Under the new system, students' faces will be registered on a dedicated app, and lecturers will only need to take group photographs at the start of class. Using artificial intelligence, the system will instantly identify students, record attendance, and upload the data directly to the department's servers.



Officials say the move aims to improve attendance monitoring and prevent the misuse of attendance records. Concerns were raised after last year's II PU results, with questions over academic standards in some government colleges despite the mandatory 75% attendance requirement for examination eligibility. The new system is expected to eliminate proxy or inflated attendance and ensure students attend classes regularly. It will also save valuable teaching time, as lecturers will no longer need to call out roll numbers individually. According to PU officials, the system is in the final stages of implementation and is expected to be fully operational by the end of June. **— BMB**

Bengaluru Airport overtakes Mumbai traffic

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has emerged as India's second-busiest airport for passenger traffic, overtaking Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, according to April data released by the Airports Authority of India (AAI). KIA handled 31.78 lakh domestic passengers during the month, ahead of Mumbai's 28.93 lakh, while Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport retained the top spot with 49.29 lakh domestic flyers. The shift is largely attributed to the operationalisation of Navi Mumbai International Airport, which handled over 5.24 lakh passengers in April, diverting a portion of Mumbai's traffic. In international travel, Mumbai remained ahead with 11.54 lakh passengers, followed by Bengaluru with 5.06 lakh, while Delhi topped the chart with 17.22 lakh international travellers. **— BMB**

Over 10,000 tobacco-related deaths in state

As Bengaluru observes World No Tobacco Day on Sunday, the alarming news is that more than 10,000 people with a history of tobacco use died from various forms of cancer in Karnataka last year, with men bearing a significantly higher burden than women. According to data from the Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, smoking and smokeless tobacco products such as gutka continue to be major cancer risk factors. Men were most commonly affected by lung, oral and tongue cancers, while women largely suffered from lung, oral and oesophageal cancers. Doctors noted that while tobacco may not be the sole cause of every death, a large number of cancer patients had a history of tobacco consumption.

Of the 35,839 tobacco-linked cancer cases recorded in Karnataka in 2025, men accounted for 20,652 cases compared to 15,187 among women. Tobacco-related cancers also claimed more male lives, with 5,814 deaths among men against 4,230 among women. Overall, tobacco-linked cancers were responsible for 10,044 deaths, making up more than 44 per cent of all cancer fatalities in the state. Bengaluru too reported a high number of such cases. Experts warned that tobacco use increases the risk of cancers affecting the lungs, mouth, throat, stomach and pancreas, besides contributing to heart disease, respiratory disorders, weakened immunity and several other serious health problems. **— BMB**

Booze brawl ends in murder

Gangammagudi Police have apprehended a man for allegedly killing his friend following a drunken quarrel and later disposing of the body in a BDA park in north Bengaluru. Two other accused, who allegedly assisted in dumping the body, remain absconding.

The case came to light on April 24, after a resident of Nisarga Layout in Abbigere alerted the police upon discovering a sack containing a human body inside a BDA park. The victim's leg was protruding from the sack, prompting an immediate call to the 112 emergency helpline.

Police registered a murder case and launched an investigation. After tracing the victim's relatives, the deceased was identified as Vidhya Prasad, alias Vidhyabharathi, a native of Uttar Pradesh.

Investigators later detained one of the victim's associates from Gorakhpur on May 20. During interrogation, he allegedly confessed to the crime. Police said the accused and the deceased worked as painters and shared rented accommodation in Bengaluru.

According to the police, the two consumed alcohol on April 20, when an argument escalated into a violent assault. The victim allegedly succumbed to his injuries. The accused then, with the help of two associates, packed the body into a sack, transported it on a scooter and dumped it in the park.

The arrested accused has been remanded in judicial custody, while efforts are continuing to trace the absconding suspects.

–BMB

Quick response saves life

A man in emotional distress was rescued from an attempted suicide by Bengaluru police and Fire and Emergency Services personnel in Ramamurthy Nagar on Thursday morning. The incident occurred at around 9.23 am in Ankapa Reddy Layout, Kasturi Nagar, within the limits of the Ramamurthy Nagar Police Station. According to police, a family member alerted the 112 helpline after the man climbed onto an apartment building and threatened to jump. The information was immediately relayed to ASI Chowdappa and Head Constable Parashuram of Hoysala-241. The officers reached the spot within six minutes and coordinated with Fire and Emergency Services personnel to safely rescue the individual before any harm could come to him.

During questioning, the man reportedly said he had taken the extreme step because his family intended to admit him to hospital for medical treatment. Police counselled and reassured him before safely handing him over to his family members. The swift response saved a life.

–BMB

Rain hero earns applause

As heavy rain lashed Bengaluru, a police constable's act of kindness has won widespread appreciation on social media. Constable Anil, attached to Byatarayanapura Police Station, came to the aid of a differently abled youth who was struggling to cross a waterlogged road amid the downpour.

Witnessing the youth's difficulty in navigating the flooded stretch, Anil stepped in and carefully guided him to safety. The gesture was captured on video and shared online, where it quickly drew praise from citizens for the constable's compassion and sense of duty. With several parts of the city experiencing flooding due to heavy rainfall, the incident highlighted the challenges faced by vulnerable road users and the role of police personnel in extending assistance beyond their law enforcement duties.

–BMB

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Wrapped in a plastic problem

B'luru's anti-plastic drive bags record collections, but offenders continue finding ways around the rules

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The Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) has collected nearly Rs 2.2 crore in penalties for the sale and use of banned single-use plastic (SUP) items in the city over the past year.

The amount was collected through the seizure of 77,000 kilograms of banned plastic items in more than 42,000 cases registered between June 2025 and May 2026.

This is the highest penalty amount collected in the past four years since the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change imposed a ban on 19 SUP items in 2022.

Between July 2022 and May 2023, Rs 1.29 crore in penalties was collected and 58,000 kilograms of banned plastic items were seized. Between June 2023 and May 2024, Rs 1.09 crore was collected in penalties. Between June 2024 and May 2025, penalties amounting to Rs 53.7 lakh were imposed on violators.

Grassroots activists and experts say the large number of cases registered and the high penalties collected suggest there has been no decline in the use of banned SUP items in the city despite intensified enforcement.

Banned plastic haul exposes gaps in enforcement and awareness

According to them, the increasing presence of banned plastic items across the city is deeply concerning. They say plastic bags, silver-coated plates and pouches, and even disposable plastic cups, which had become relatively uncommon a few years ago, are now widely visible again, littering streets and public spaces.

"It is increasingly common to see people carrying puja flowers in plastic bags — an irony that highlights how environmentally harmful practices have become normalised despite legal restrictions. In 2026, amid growing concerns about climate change, it is essential for every individual to consciously reduce plastic consumption by adopting simple practices such as carrying reusable bags," said Odette Katrak, co-founder of Beautiful Bharat, a citizen volunteer group.

Starting on July 1, 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) imposed a nationwide ban on 19 SUP items. Following the ban, the Central Pollution Control Board announced that anyone caught using, selling, manufacturing, distributing, importing or stocking these products would be penalised. The 19 banned items include earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice cream sticks, thermocol used for decoration, plastic plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons and knives, straws, trays, wrapping or packaging films used around sweet boxes, invitation cards and cigarette packets, PVC banners measuring less than 100 microns, and stirrers.

Since the ban, a total of 1.33 lakh cases involving the use of banned SUP items have been registered in the city, initially by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike and later by BSWML. Under these cases, more than Rs 5.05 crore has been collected in penalties, and more than 1.5 lakh kilograms of banned items have been seized.Experts say the most critical step is to stop the inflow of banned materials by taking strict action against manufacturers. Unless production is effectively curbed, community-level awareness campaigns and waste management efforts will have limited impact.

Katrak said that despite the ban, several manufacturing units continue to operate clandestinely, often during the night. In addition, large quantities of banned products remain in circulation through wholesale suppliers. Enforcement must therefore lead to meaningful consequences, including the permanent closure of repeat offenders, rather than temporary suspensions that allow them to quickly resume operations.

"There is also a damaging cycle within the waste ecosystem. Banned plastic bags move from wholesale markets to retailers, vendors and households before ending up in landfills. Breaking this chain at the source is crucial," added Katrak.

Cash returns as apps fail

A section of bus commuters is facing payment hassles as recurring UPI failures continue to affect ticket purchases on both KSRTC and BMTC services. While KSRTC has received multiple complaints from passengers travelling on the Bengaluru–Mysuru route, many say UPI transactions are repeatedly failing, forcing them to rely on cash or fellow travellers to buy tickets. KSRTC officials said the issue appears to be limited to a specific stretch on the Bengaluru–Mysuru corridor and has been taken up with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Officials believe a network-related issue is affecting certain transactions. The corporation, which earns an average of 1.61 crore daily through UPI payments, expects to resolve the problem within a few days.

BMTC passengers are reporting similar issues after the introduction of dynamic QR code-based electronic ticketing machines (ETMs). Commuters say QR codes often fail to scan or transactions do not go through, leaving conductors to insist on cash payments. In several cases, passengers without cash have been asked to either pay immediately or alight from the bus, highlighting the growing inconvenience caused by digital payment disruptions on Bengaluru's public transport network.

–BMB

Pink Line drags closer, but you must wait for it till 2027

Pending approvals, safety assessments and unfinished civil works are pushing Bengaluru Metro's longest underground Pink Line stretch towards early 2027

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Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) is racing against time to open the city's longest underground Pink Line section by December. However, with key civil works still incomplete and multiple safety approvals pending, officials now say commercial operations are more likely to begin in early 2027.

The 21-km Pink Line corridor connecting Kalena Agrahara and Nagawara includes a 13.76-km underground stretch between Dairy Circle and Nagawara, making it the longest tunnel section in Bengaluru Metro's network so far.

Trial runs have begun on the 7.5-km elevated section between Kalena Agrahara and Tavarekere, with BMRCL targeting a public launch within two months. However, officials now believe the underground section, originally planned to open six months later, is unlikely to meet that timeline.

Unlike the Yellow Line, where completed civil work was delayed due to a shortage of trains, the Pink Line faces the opposite challenge. BEML has already supplied four train sets for the corridor, but construction work continues across several underground packages.

At present, work remains under way between Tannery Road and Venkateshpura Road stations. Officials said around 5 to 10 per cent of civil work in the tunnel stretch is still pending. Construction activity also continues at underground stations and terminal facilities.

Remaining civil works continue between Tannery Road and Venkateshpura Road

"Track laying work between Tannery Road and Venkateshpura Road stations has been largely completed. Safety-related works are now being carried out on both sides of the tracks. Overall track installation has reached 92.55 percent completion," a Metro official said.

Electrical installations, furnishing work and platform-level systems are also progressing at underground stations. For the first time in Bengaluru Metro, Platform Screen Doors (PSD) are being installed across stations on the underground corridor.

According to BMRCL, work at the Kothanur depot near Arekere, which will maintain Pink Line trains, is nearing completion. However, some depot-related infrastructure linked to underground operations remains pending. Overall project execution has crossed 93 per cent, officials added.

The biggest challenge remains securing mandatory approvals before commercial operations can begin. The underground corridor requires clearances from RDSO and CMRS. Before approval, BMRCL must complete extensive trial runs, document operational records, and submit an independent safety assessment report, making the approval process a significant hurdle for the project.

> **"Track laying work between Tannery Road and Venkateshpura Road stations has been largely completed. Safety-related works are now being carried out on both sides of the tracks. Overall track installation has reached 92.55 percent completion** – Metro Official

"All these procedures will take a minimum of three months. So even if the remaining civil work is completed on time, opening the underground stretch for public operations will take additional time," a senior BMRCL official said.

Illegal tree felling allegations spark public outrage

Urbanisation continues putting Bengaluru's already declining green cover at risk

Complaint closure without ground inspection raises questions over accountability, grievance redressal mechanisms and monitoring of tree-related violations

A social media post alleging the felling of healthy trees outside a café in north Bengaluru has reignited concerns over the city's shrinking green cover and the alleged lack of action against illegal tree cutting.

The controversy began after a user on X shared photographs of chopped tree branches outside a Starbucks outlet on Sahakarnagar Main Road and accused businesses of damaging trees to improve storefront visibility or facilitate the laying of private cables.

"Such a common sight these days in Bengaluru... Healthy trees are chopped if they are in front of shops and restaurants or for private WiFi cables to pass through," the user wrote, tagging Starbucks India and calling the act "shameful and lazy."

> **"Healthy trees are routinely hacked in the name of visibility, cable work, or construction activity. In many cases, complaints are closed without proper field verification** – Environmental activist

The post drew widespread reactions from residents and environmental activists, many of whom said indiscriminate trimming and cutting of roadside trees had become increasingly common across Bengaluru. Adding to the criticism, another social media user alleged that complaints about illegal tree trimming often go unaddressed.

The user said he reported a similar issue through the BBMP Sahaaya 2.0 platform and informed the Deputy Range Forest Officer via WhatsApp, but alleged the grievance was closed without any ground inspection.

The post further urged officials in the Chief Minister's Office to intervene and get an enquiry report from the concerned authorities.

Civic activists said the incident reflects a broader pattern of weak enforcement and poor monitoring of tree protection regulations, where rapid urbanisation and commercial activity continue to put pressure on green cover. "Healthy trees are routinely hacked in the name of visibility, cable work, or construction activity. In many cases, complaints are closed without proper field verification," said an environmental activist. Residents have called for stricter enforcement against unauthorised tree cutting, greater transparency in grievance redressal mechanisms, and mandatory on-site inspections before complaints are disposed of.

— BMB

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Civic neglect

Kilari Road

Residents say stagnant gutter water, garbage accumulation and construction debris have turned a stretch of Kilari Road into an unsafe and unhygienic passage, particularly for senior citizens and pedestrians.

Safety hazard

Hanumanthanagar

A poorly secured electrical transformer beside a waste dump at a park in Gavipuram Extension, Hanumanthanagar, poses a serious fire and public safety risk, prompting calls for immediate action from KEB and BBMP.

Blocked drain

Marathahalli

A blocked stormwater drain in the nursing home area of Marathahalli has raised concerns among residents, who fear waterlogging and related civic issues.

Delayed tree census raises concerns for city's green cover

Environmental concerns persist as delayed census work coincides with stalled efforts to free avenue trees from concrete encroachment

PICS: KAUSHIK JN

More than two years after Bengaluru's tree census began in 2024, the exercise remains incomplete and continues to face delays.

According to the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), the on-ground census process will take at least two more months due to slow enumeration in some zones.

"We are in touch with contractors carrying out the census process. It will take another two months for the on- round work to be completed," said Sudarshan GK, Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), Greater Bengaluru Authority.

Notably, Bengaluru's tree census was scheduled to be completed by March 2026 after multiple deadline extensions.

While the Karnataka High Court directed the GBA (formerly BBMP) to begin the census in 2019, on-ground work started only in February 2024 after a delay of nearly five years. The initial deadline of August 2024 was later revised to November 2024, then March 2025, followed by December 2025 and March 2026. Despite these extensions, the project remains unfinished.

Even as the census progresses, hundreds of avenue trees across the city continue to remain encased in concrete around their bases.

According to the forest cell of the GBA, there is still no clarity on deconcretisation by the concerned department. Earlier this year, the Forest, Environment and Climate Change (FECC) cell wrote to chief engineers across all five city corporation limits, seeking immediate action to remove concrete and tiles from around avenue trees.

"It has been four months since we wrote to the respective engineers to carry out deconcretisation of avenue trees. We also provided the location of some of these trees based on our short-term enumeration and evaluation exercise undertaken last year to identify problematic avenue trees in the city. However, we have not heard back," said a GBA official.

A survey conducted by the GBA on major roads identified 128 avenue trees whose bases had been concretised up to the trunk, leaving no space for water or air.

1. Branches of a huge tree came crashing on Richmond Road during Saturday's rain;
2. Another treefall in HAL

> **"We also provided the location of some of these trees based on our short-term enumeration and evaluation exercise undertaken last year to identify problematic avenue trees in the city** –GBA Official

The issue has repeatedly been raised by tree activists and environmentalists. Following such demands, on June 10 last year, the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment issued a Government Order directing deconcretisation of tree bases across Karnataka to improve tree health and survival. The order was issued on the directions of Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre.

Following the Government Order, the FECC cell of GBA also directed the Road Infrastructure Department to remove concrete, stone and cement blocks around tree bases and maintain a one-metre radius as per National Green Tribunal guidelines.

Illegal online sales exposed

Several leading e-commerce platforms are under scrutiny for allegedly selling banned, fake and substandard products, including unauthorised walkie-talkies, medicines and cosmetics. Government agencies have registered thousands of complaints, imposed penalties, and launched criminal proceedings against firms found violating consumer protection and quality norms. In a major crackdown, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) officials raided 79 warehouses and facilities linked to e-commerce firms across 15 states, including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu. Authorities revealed that nearly 16,960 walkie-talkies were sold online in 2025 without mandatory licences and approvals. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has prohibited unauthorised sales of radio communication equipment, warning that illegal devices pose public safety risks and may interfere with emergency communication systems.

Eight firms were penalised, with four companies fined Rs 10 lakh each and four others Rs 1 lakh each. Between August 2022 and June 2025, authorities removed over 1.21 crore counterfeit products and initiated legal action against sellers. BIS tests found that only 144 of 209 online samples met quality standards. **–BMB**

School fire sparks alarm

A major fire broke out at Chitrakoota Kaushalya School near Jnanabharathi in Bengaluru's Visvesvaraya Layout on Saturday at around 9.55 am, causing panic among residents. No casualties or injuries were reported as the school was closed for summer holidays.

According to police, the fire started on the fifth floor of the building. Preliminary investigations suggest an electrical short circuit may have triggered the blaze. The fire was first noticed in the auditorium and quickly spread across the entire floor.

A few staff members present in the auditorium escaped safely before the flames intensified.

Three fire tenders were rushed to the spot after authorities received information about the incident. Fire and Emergency Services personnel launched an operation and brought the blaze under control after several hours, preventing it from spreading to other parts of the campus.

Police and fire officials have begun investigating the exact cause of the fire and assessing the extent of property damage. **–BMB**

CHANGE OF GUARD

PERSISTENCE, PRAYER AND PATIENCE PROPEL DKS

After years of calculated restraint, spiritual faith and political endurance, Shivakumar's long-awaited leadership moment finally arrives

DK Shivakumar was formally appointed as CM-designate by the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) on Saturday. However, for over a year, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar kept both supporters and rivals guessing with cryptic remarks, spiritual references and carefully worded political hints. As speculation over Karnataka's future leadership gathered pace within the Congress, his public appearances often featured loaded one-liners such as, "When the right moment arrives, nobody can stop destiny," "Even if attempts fail, prayers will succeed," and "There is no God greater than Shiva." The remarks only added to the intrigue surrounding his political ambitions and the state's leadership debate.

Popularly known as DKS, the Kanakapura strongman mixed faith with politics while carefully navigating one of the most delicate power equations in the state Congress. After months of political uncertainty, he is now set to take oath as Karnataka's Chief Minister next week, bringing an end to prolonged speculation over the state's leadership.

Deeply religious by temperament, Shivakumar is known in political circles for his extensive knowledge of temples, rituals and spiritual traditions across India. From Udupi Krishna to Nonavinakere Ajjayya, and from Kashi to Kanyakumari, he spent the last several months visiting shrines, offering prayers and seeking blessings.

Congress insiders say these temples visits reflected not only personal devotion but also the patience and determination of a leader who believed his political journey was still incomplete.

Power puzzle

After leading the Congress campaign in the 2023 Assembly elections as KPCC president, Shivakumar naturally emerged as a strong contender for the Chief Minister's post. However, Siddaramaiah's mass appeal and strong AHINDA vote base made it difficult for the Congress high command to settle the leadership issue easily.

The eventual compromise saw Siddaramaiah become Chief Minister while Shivakumar continued as KPCC president and assumed office as Deputy Chief Minister. From the outset, speculation persisted about a possible power-sharing arrangement involving a leadership change midway through the government's tenure.

Following the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Shivakumar reportedly intensified his engagement with the Congress high command. At the same time, resistance from Siddaramaiah loyalists grew stronger. Several ministers and MLAs publicly maintained that Siddaramaiah would continue for the full term, while others denied the existence of any rotational agreement.

Political stress test

Yet, instead of responding aggressively, the otherwise combative Congress leader adopted a noticeably restrained approach. Choosing caution over confrontation, he often deflected provocative remarks with measured humour.

"Oh, did they say that? Then perhaps they themselves are the high command," he would say with a smile.

Party leaders acknowledge that this carefully calibrated silence helped prevent simmering tensions from escalating into an open internal conflict.

S M Krishna effect

Many within the Congress believe Shivakumar consciously remodelled his political behaviour in recent years under the influence of former Chief Minister S M Krishna, whom he regarded as a mentor. Unlike the aggressive and emotionally charged DKS of the past, the current version appeared measured, composed and politically cautious.

He spoke less, avoided direct confrontation and became selective in his media interactions.

Political strategy

Even while disappointed at missing the top post initially, Shivakumar maintained a respectful public relationship with Siddaramaiah. Congress leaders say balancing ambition with loyalty strengthened his credibility with the party high command.

Gandhi loyalist

Throughout his political journey, Shivakumar remained unwavering in his faith in Sonia Gandhi. Those close to him say he strongly believed she would eventually stand by him despite shifting political equations.

Congress sources also point to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's support during internal consultations. Party insiders claim Rahul Gandhi eventually accepted the leadership transition after sustained backing from both Sonia and Priyanka.

For Shivakumar and his supporters, the long wait appears to have paid off. They describe his elevation not merely as a political development, but as the culmination of patience, prayer and persistence. —BMB

KAUSHIK JN

Siddaramaiah continues public outreach post-resignation

Caretaker Chief Minister Siddaramaiah continued meeting members of the public on Saturday, hearing grievances and accepting petitions at his Kaveri residence in Bengaluru. Despite stepping down from office earlier this week, the senior Congress leader remained actively engaged with citizens, interacting with people who approached him with various concerns and requests. Siddaramaiah resigned from the Chief Minister's post on Thursday, describing the move as a voluntary decision made in accordance with the guidance of the Congress leadership. He submitted his resignation through the Governor's Special Secretary at Lok Bhavan, initiating the state's leadership transition process. —BMB

New CM can't solve old problems, says Bommai

BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj S Bommai on Saturday questioned the significance of the impending leadership change in Karnataka, arguing that installing a new Chief Minister would not resolve the challenges currently facing the state.

Addressing reporters, Bommai said the swearing-in ceremony expected on Monday would have little impact on the everyday problems faced by citizens. He said a change in leadership alone could not address what he described as shortcomings in governance and development. Bommai alleged that Karnataka was facing mounting financial pressures and claimed public dissatisfaction had grown due to the government's inability to deliver effective administration and development. —BMB

DKS elected, CLP clears path

Karnataka Congress president DK Shivakumar was unanimously selected as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) on Saturday, clearing the path for him to assume the office of Chief Minister, according to party insiders.

At the CLP meeting held at Vidhana Soudha, senior Congress leader and outgoing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah formally proposed Shivakumar's name for the top post. AICC general secretaries K C Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala supervised the proceedings.

Sources said the meeting was briefly adjourned after the leadership selection, following which Siddaramaiah, Venugopal and Surjewala held a closed-door discussion in a separate room.

The leadership transition follows Siddaramaiah's resignation on Thursday. Governor Gehlot accepted his resignation and dissolved ministers. —BMB

DKS set to take oath on Wednesday

DK Shivakumar is set to take oath as Chief Minister on Wednesday at 4.05 pm Earlier in the day, Shivakumar departed for the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting amid a large gathering of supporters outside his residence. Upon arriving at the Vidhana Soudha, he was seen paying his respects by touching the steps of the state legislature building before entering. Meanwhile, astrologer Aaradhya, who had met Shivakumar earlier, told journalists that he had recommended June 3 at 5.15 pm as an auspicious time for the oath-taking ceremony. —BMB

Kharge dismisses meeting buzz

Amid growing speculation over Karnataka's impending cabinet reshuffle, Congress leader Priyank Kharge dismissed concerns surrounding Yathindra Siddaramaiah's recent meeting with senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, describing it as a routine interaction within the party. Kharge said party leaders and workers regularly meet the high command and reiterated that he was not seeking any position. "There is nothing unusual about Dr Yathindra meeting Rahul Gandhi. Party leaders and workers regularly interact with the high command. I have no personal demands, and we will fully accept whatever decision the party leadership takes," Kharge stated. —BMB

THE SUNDAY READ

From foreign shores to Indian plates

Fascinating story of crops we think are 'ours'

Did you know some of the most common ingredients in Indian kitchens were once foreigners? From chillies and potatoes to tomatoes and coffee, several crops that define Indian food today actually arrived centuries ago from distant continents through Portuguese and British trade routes. Over time, these plants adapted so deeply to Indian soil, climate and culture that they now feel completely native. As the country observed International Biodiversity Day on Friday, here's a closer look at how foreign crops quietly transformed Indian agriculture, cuisine and economy. —BMB

Tomato mystery

There was a time when tomatoes were viewed suspiciously as a "foreign vegetable." Native to South America, tomatoes entered India through Portuguese trade networks in the 1500s and later became more widely cultivated during British rule. Gradually, they became indispensable to Indian cooking. Today, from rasam and curries to chutneys and street food, tomatoes are an essential part of Indian cuisine. India is also among the world's top tomato-producing countries.

Cashew journey

Cashew trees also arrived from Brazil through Portuguese traders. Interestingly, they were initially introduced not for food, but to help prevent soil erosion along India's coastal regions. Over the centuries, cashew cultivation spread across Goa, Karnataka and Kerala, eventually becoming a major commercial crop. In 2023, "Goa Cashew" received Geographical Indication (GI) status. India today is one of the world's major cashew producers and exporters.

Chilli shock

Indian food without chillies sounds unimaginable today. But before the 16th century, Indians mainly used black pepper and long pepper for spice. Chillies originally came from Central and South America and were introduced to India by Portuguese traders. Over time, they spread rapidly across the country and became central to Indian cooking. Today, Andhra Pradesh is one of India's biggest chilli-producing states, while Karnataka's famous Byadagi chilli has received GI tag recognition. India is now among the world's largest producers and exporters of chillies.

Pineapple route

Pineapple traces its origins to regions around Brazil and Peru. Portuguese traders are believed to have introduced the fruit to Goa in the 16th century, partly because of its high Vitamin C content. Later, pineapple cultivation spread to royal gardens and agricultural estates across India. Today, the fruit is widely cultivated in Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal and several Northeastern states.

Potato boom

The potato, now a staple in everything from samosas to masala dosa fillings, originally came from Peru and Bolivia in South America. Portuguese traders introduced potatoes to India through the western coast during the 17th century. Over time, the crop spread nationwide due to its adaptability and high yield. India is now the world's second-largest potato producer, with Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar leading cultivation.

Coffee legend

Ask anyone about Chikkamagaluru and the first thing that comes to mind is coffee. But commercial coffee cultivation in India is widely linked to a fascinating 17th-century legend. Popular lore says Sufi saint Baba Budan secretly brought seven coffee beans from Yemen while returning from Mecca and planted them in the hills of present-day Chikkamagaluru. At the time, Yemen reportedly restricted the export of fertile coffee seeds. Those few beans are believed to have laid the foundation for India's coffee culture. Today, Karnataka contributes nearly 70% of India's coffee production, while India ranks among the world's leading coffee-producing countries.

Tobacco trend

Tobacco also entered India through Portuguese trade routes and soon became popular among royal courts and wealthy elites. Hookah smoking later turned into a status symbol in several kingdoms. Though tobacco became an economically significant crop, it is now recognised globally as a major public health hazard.

Lantana warning

Not every foreign plant benefited India. Lantana, brought to India by the British as an ornamental flowering plant from Central and South America, eventually became one of the country's most dangerous invasive species. Experts say lantana spreads aggressively, suppresses native plants and disrupts ecosystems by altering wildlife habitats and food chains. Today, it is considered a major ecological threat in several forests across India.

From coffee beans hidden during a sea journey to chillies that reshaped Indian cuisine forever, these travelling crops tell the remarkable story of how biodiversity crossed oceans and became part of everyday Indian life.

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

WINGS OF BALANCE

Our reader shares a striking image of a Zebra Blue Butterfly spotted on the outskirts of Bengaluru. Delicate yet vital to the environment, the presence of this butterfly is an indicator of a healthy ecosystem. Butterflies play an important role as pollinators, aiding the reproduction of numerous plant species, while also contributing to nutrient cycling and maintaining ecological balance.

The picture was clicked by reader **Sridhar Comaravalli**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

Pothole hunter uses smartphone to make roads safer daily

For over two years, Naveed has documented road hazards and alerted authorities, helping spotlight dangers faced by commuters

Bengaluru is home to countless photography enthusiasts who capture everything from vibrant sunsets and bustling streets to the city's architectural landmarks. But one Bengaluru resident has found a very different subject for his camera lens: potholes. For more than two years, Naveed, a staff member at a Reliance Industries store in Kammanahalli, has used his mobile phone not to pursue photography as a hobby, but to document one of the city's most persistent civic problems. His mission is simple: spot a pothole, click a photograph and alert the authorities before it causes an accident.

Every day, thousands of commuters navigate Bengaluru's roads, often weaving around damaged stretches, crater-like potholes and uneven surfaces. While most people notice these hazards and move on, believing there is little they can do, Naveed decided to act.

Crumbled roadside sections force motorists to navigate carefully, reflecting the road safety concerns that inspired Naveed's mission.

Armed only with his smartphone, he photographs potholes across different parts of the city and shares the images with the concerned civic authorities, drawing attention to road conditions that many commuters silently endure. He said, "Potholes remain one of the biggest challenges for Bengaluru's motorists, particularly two-wheeler riders. Apart from causing traffic slowdowns, damaged roads often result in delays for office-goers, students and emergency services. In many cases, they also cause serious accidents."

According to Naveed, the daily struggles he witnessed on city roads motivated him to begin documenting potholes. From ambulances finding it difficult to manoeuvre through damaged stretches to riders losing

Armed with determination rather than professional equipment, a city resident turns everyday observations into civic action, proving that one person's persistence can encourage repairs and contribute to safer journeys

balance while attempting to avoid deep craters, the scenes left a lasting impression on him. Rather than merely complaining about the problem, he chose to become part of the solution. His photographs have, on several occasions, prompted authorities to take note of road damage and initiate repairs. While he does not consider himself a photographer, his growing collection of pothole images has become an important record of civic issues affecting lakhs of commuters.

Friends and colleagues often joke that while others search for scenic landscapes to photograph, Naveed searches for potholes. But behind every image lies a larger purpose: making roads safer for everyone. His efforts also encourage greater civic participation and highlight how individual action can contribute to addressing long-standing urban challenges. For Naveed, every pothole photographed is one more step towards safer roads.

— Abijna & Ananya

DID YOU KNOW?

Scientists have identified a new species of giant marine reptile, Tylosaurus rex, often described as the "T rex of the sea" due to its immense size and predatory abilities. The species lived around 80 million years ago in a vast inland sea that divided North America during the Cretaceous Period. Researchers distinguished it from other Tylosaurus species through a detailed study of fossils, noting its enormous size, serrated teeth designed for slicing flesh, and powerful jaw and neck muscles suited for tackling large prey. The largest known specimen, nicknamed "Bunker," measures about 43 feet (13.2 meters) long, making it even longer than the largest known Tyrannosaurus rex specimen, "Sue," which measures about 40.5 feet (12.3 meters). Tylosaurus rex belonged to the mosasaurs, a group of marine reptiles that evolved from land-dwelling lizards and became apex ocean predators. Scientists believe Tylosaurus rex preyed on large fish and other marine reptiles, using its strong muscles and sharp teeth to tear apart victims. Most fossils have been found in Texas and Kansas. The species name honours Tyrannosaurus rex, highlighting its role as one of the most formidable predators ever to rule the seas.

— Reuters

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Gardeners often hear about supposed hacks and quick fixes. Here are some common ones debunked

The Claim: Many popular gardening hacks promoted by social media influencers and well-meaning gardeners using vinegar for weeds, wound paint, annual tilling, daily watering, and landscape fabric are effective ways to improve garden health.
Fact: Experts say these practices often harm plants and soil. Better alternatives include mulching, proper pruning, composting, deep watering, and limited soil disturbance to support healthier, more resilient gardens.

Now that the gardening season is in full swing, so is the bad advice. There is no shortage of social media "experts" doling out "genius gardening hacks," and well-intended friends who, frankly, don't know what they're talking about. Their tips might sound brilliant on the surface, but dig deeper and many belong in the compost pile. Gardening experts warn that several widely shared practices can damage plants and create long-term problems in the garden.

Vinegar is not a miracle weedkiller

One common misconception is that household vinegar serves as a safe and natural weedkiller. While it can burn weed foliage, it works only as a contact herbicide and rarely kills roots, allowing weeds to return. Horticultural vinegar, with its higher acetic acid concentration, is more effective but can harm soil, nearby plants and even cause injuries. Experts recommend manually removing weeds from garden beds and covering the soil with three to four inches of organic mulch to suppress future growth. For weeds in cracks between pavers, baking soda, crevice-weeding tools or targeted propane flame tools offer effective solutions.

Tree wounds heal without sealants

Another piece of outdated advice encourages gardeners to apply wound paint after pruning trees. Trees naturally compartmentalize wounds, making sealants largely unnecessary. In many cases, these products trap moisture and pathogens, increasing the risk of decay.
Light sealants remain useful only for elm or oak trees pruned during the growing season to help prevent Dutch elm disease and oak wilt. Otherwise, experts advise using proper pruning techniques and allowing wounds to heal naturally.

Stop over-tilling garden beds

Annual tilling may leave gardens looking tidy, but excessive soil disturbance destroys beneficial microbes, harms earthworms, disrupts fungal networks and increases erosion. It can also bring dormant weed seeds to the surface, where they readily germinate.
Gardeners should instead spread a two- to three-inch layer of compost over beds and allow it to integrate naturally. Where compaction exists, a broad fork or garden fork can loosen soil without extensive damage.

Deep watering works better

Experts discourage daily light watering. Frequent shallow watering keeps moisture near the surface and encourages weak root systems. Instead, gardeners should water deeply and less often to promote stronger roots capable of accessing moisture from deeper soil layers. They also recommend organic mulch instead of landscape fabric in garden beds, as mulch helps regulate soil temperature, retain moisture and improve soil health over time.

— AP

RCB and GT battle for glory in Ahmedabad

Familiar rivals, different stakes

The Indian Premier League season that began with ten teams chasing a dream now comes down to two franchises separated by contrasting styles but united by a common ambition. Under the lights of the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans will meet in the IPL 2026 final with the trophy and a place in league history at stake.

For Royal Challengers Bengaluru, the opportunity is clear: a victory would make them only the third franchise, after Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings, to successfully defend an IPL crown. For the Gujarat Titans, the challenge is equally compelling. Playing at home and seeking a second title in four seasons, they have the chance to avenge their crushing defeat to RCB in Qualifier 1 and reclaim the crown they last lifted in 2022.

The finalists have travelled different routes to reach the summit clash. RCB stormed directly into the final after dismantling Gujarat by 92 runs earlier this week, posting a playoff-record 254/5 in a display of relentless batting aggression. The Titans were forced to take the longer road, regrouping swiftly to overcome Rajasthan Royals in Qualifier 2 and secure another shot at the title.

The contest presents an intriguing tactical battle. Bengaluru's success has been built on fearless batting, with Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Phil Salt, Devdutt Padikkal, Tim David, and Venkatesh Iyer forming arguably the deepest batting unit in the competition. Their willingness to attack regardless of conditions has made them one of the most destructive sides of the season.

Gujarat, meanwhile, have relied on a more measured blueprint. Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan have mastered the art of constructing innings before accelerating, a strategy that has produced over 1,400 runs between them. Alongside Jos Buttler, the trio has carried much of the batting responsibility and will once again be expected to provide the platform.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's captain Rajat Patidar plays a shot during a practice session ahead of the IPL final

If Bengaluru possess the stronger batting card, Gujarat can counter with arguably the tournament's most formidable pace attack. Purple Cap leader Kagiso Rabada and Mohammed Siraj have formed a potent new-ball partnership, while Rashid Khan, Prasidh Krishna, and Jason Holder provide depth and variety. Much could depend on Siraj's fitness after the fast bowler appeared to struggle with a shoulder issue during Qualifier 2.

RCB's bowling resources, however, are equally capable of deciding the contest. Bhuvneshwar Kumar has enjoyed a stellar campaign with 26 wickets, while Josh Hazlewood, Rasikh Salam, and Krunal Pandya have consistently delivered breakthroughs at crucial moments.

The numbers suggest a closely fought battle. RCB hold a narrow 5-4 advantage in the overall head-to-head record and have won two of the three meetings between the sides this season. Yet Gujarat have turned Ahmedabad into a fortress, winning five of their seven home matches during the campaign.

Momentum favours Bengaluru. Conditions favour Gujarat. The trophy will belong to whichever side imposes its identity more effectively on the biggest night of the season.

By Sunday night, either Patidar's defending champions will cement their status as the league's newest powerhouse, or Gill's Titans will complete a homecoming worthy of champions. Either way, IPL 2026 is set for a fitting finale. **–IANS**

Today's battle

Royal Challengers Bengaluru
VS
Gujarat Titans

7.30 PM | **Ahmedabad**

Fans are us

Artists and citizens paint a community wall mural for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) ahead of the IPL 2026 final cricket match, in Bengaluru

No honking, no speeding: Traffic police warn of night-long checks in city

Bengaluru Traffic Police have issued a series of guidelines ahead of the IPL 2026 final match scheduled on Sunday, warning of strict enforcement measures to ensure public safety and smooth traffic flow across the city.

According to the advisory, drunken driving checks will be conducted throughout the night at multiple locations, with police intensifying vehicle inspections to prevent untoward incidents. Authorities have also warned that strict action will be taken against two-wheeler riders involved in overspeeding, reckless riding, wheeling, and drag racing. Citizens can report such violations through the police emergency helpline 112.

The police have prohibited victory celebrations on public roads and cautioned motorists against unnecessary parking on roads and footpaths, which could obstruct traffic movement and inconvenience pedestrians. Excessive honking under the pretext of celebrations has also been banned.

Support staff sweeps the stands ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 Final T20 cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans, in Ahmedabad

Additionally, dangerous driving practices such as standing through or opening vehicle sunroofs while driving will attract legal action. Motorists have been instructed to strictly follow traffic signals, diversions, and directions issued by traffic police personnel.

The Traffic Police appealed to the public to cooperate and adhere to the guidelines to ensure safety and smooth movement across Bengaluru during the IPL final celebrations. **–BMB**

SKIPPERS SPEAK

'I don't get burden of expectations'

Standing on the cusp of his first IPL title as captain, Shubman Gill said he does not get burdened by expectations but hoped to leverage Gujarat Titans' home advantage in the final against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Both GT and defending champions RCB are seeking their respective second IPL title at the sprawling Narendra Modi Stadium here on Sunday.

"Honestly, I don't really get the burden of expectations. There are advantages, there's familiarity when we play here, as we know the wicket, the ground, so, we know what kind of cricket we need to play here to be able to win," Gill said during the pre-final press conference.

"So, in that context, yes, I see it (playing at home) as an advantage, because there's a little bit of familiarity. If you win, it's going to be a great season, if you don't win, it'll still be a good season, but it'll be better if you win," he added.

The Titans entered the final after defeating Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets in the Qualifier 2 at Mullanpur on Friday night, before travelling to Ahmedabad. But prior to that they were in Dharamsala to play in the Qualifier 1 against RCB, a match that they lost by a massive margin of 92 runs.

So, are they wary of the fatigue factor after shuttling around the venues ahead of the final? For Gill, it was all about mindset.

"Dharamsala is kind of a difficult venue to, you know, get there and travel. But, yes, physically they (RCB) might have an advantage.

"But I think finals are all about mental, so the team that is mentally up there for the challenge is the one that's going to win," he added. **–PTI**

'Need good bowling attack to win competition'

Skipper Rajat Patidar on Saturday placed trust on his robust bowling unit led by Bhuvneshwar Kumar to help Royal Challengers Bengaluru land their second consecutive IPL title.

The Royal Challengers will take on hosts Gujarat Titans in the IPL 2026 final here on Sunday. If you want to win the competition, you need a good bowling attack. It's important to take wickets because on this track, it's easy to score 220-200. But defending 200-220 is more difficult. So, you need a better bowling side," Patidar said during the pre-match press conference.

Patidar lavished praise on senior pacer Bhuvneshwar for leading the RCB bowling unit, as the latter has taken 26 wickets from 15 matches. "I think he bowled superbly. He's an experienced bowler. It's not easy for the bowlers in this high-class competition. I think he has a lot of clarity. His plannings and strategies are very clear, and it is playing a big role."

But the 32-year-old did not forget to touch upon the importance of having sufficient backup to the new ball pair of Bhuvneshwar and Josh Hazlewood.

"Definitely, when you have top bowlers like Bhuvi and Hazlewood, you also need support from other bowlers. The way Rasik came in and did for the team, giving those breakthroughs is important because you cannot win the competition with only one or two bowlers." Rasik has taken 16 wickets from 11 matches, ensuring that the early strikes of Bhuvneshwar and Hazlewood would not go in vain. "So, I think the way Rasik has bowled throughout the tournament, it was superb and it's helping the team. There's no particular load on one or two bowlers. So, I think it's overall a good team effort," he noted. **–PTI**

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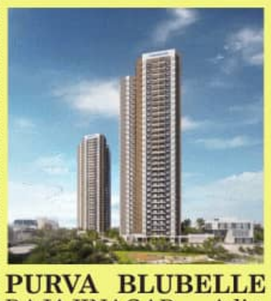

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GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ACHIEVEMENT

Hallel Music School organized a grand 'Guinness Achievers Meet' at Victory Auditorium, Hyderabad, to celebrate its historic Guinness World Record achievement.

The record event, conducted on February 2, 2026, witnessed 2,000 keyboard players from 22 countries performing continuously for one hour. Out of them, 777 students were officially recognized for their exceptional performance.

Among the achievers was Master **Jaden Moses Munnangi,** son of Mr. Sudhakar Moses Munnangi and Mrs. Veronica of Bengaluru, who successfully became part of the Guinness World Record. Jaden is currently studying in Class VIII at Devamatha Central School, Horamavu, Bengaluru.

Hallel Music School Founder Mr. Augustine Dandingi presented certificates to the achievers and congratulated them for their dedication and achievement.

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No shooting please

Conservationist seeks ban on commercial shoots in Karnataka protected areas

Citing ecological sensitivity and legal protection accorded to Protected Areas under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, a wildlife conservationist has sought prohibition of commercial film and television serial shootings within wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and tiger reserves in Karnataka.

The request by Giridhar Kulkarni, a Belagavi-based conservationist, to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force in Karnataka comes in the wake of the Kerala High Court's judgment last year prohibiting commercial film and television serial shootings within protected areas in the state.

The Kerala High Court, in July last year, passed an order stating that a government order permitting commercial film and television shooting in protected areas had no legal backing. The court directed the state government to issue appropriate instructions to the Forest Department to ensure that no film shoots are permitted in such areas without proper legal authority.

Following a Kerala court ruling, fresh demands have emerged to reassess permissions for entertainment productions, warning that noise, vehicles, crews and prolonged human activity could disrupt wildlife habitats and breeding behaviour

Kulkarni pointed out that various provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 regulate and restrict entry into national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and tiger reserves. Only certain categories of persons, such as public servants on duty, are permitted entry, while only specified activities are allowed. The law also prohibits teasing or molesting wild animals, littering sanctuary premises, destroying or exploiting wildlife, removing wildlife, or damaging habitats.

"Karnataka Forest Department, in December last year, issued a circular regarding permissions for shooting of feature films, serials, short films, documentaries, etc. in the forests of Karnataka, which was in accordance with a state government order issued in March 2025.

However, in view of the subsequent legal developments and judicial observations emerging from Kerala, the matter requires urgent reconsideration from the standpoint of wildlife conservation law, protected area governance and ecological safeguards," Kulkarni noted in his letter.

The letter states that commercial film shootings, television serial productions, and associated activities often involve large crews, artificial lighting, generators, vehicular movement, noise pollution, temporary infrastructure, crowding, and prolonged human presence.

These activities can disturb wildlife behaviour, breeding patterns, and habitat integrity. Such activities are fundamentally inconsistent with the conservation objectives of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Tiger Reserves. **BMB**

Guard allegedly ends life beneath bank building

A security guard allegedly died by suicide beneath a bank building on Saturday afternoon. Pintu, who hailed from Bihar, was working as a security guard through a GIS security agency for the past month.

According to preliminary investigations, the 22-year-old killed himself at the bank premises. Passersby and local residents, who noticed him, alerted the police. Officers rushed to the spot and shifted the body for postmortem examination.

Police said that Pintu was staying away from his family. However, the circumstances that led him to take the extreme step remain unclear.

A case of unnatural death has been registered by Subramanya Nagar police, who have launched an investigation into the incident. **BMB**

2 held for allegedly selling beef as mutton

Avalahalli police have arrested two men for allegedly selling beef without a licence and passing it off as mutton at a restaurant in east Bengaluru.

The accused have been identified as Jeeju Alexander (45), a resident of Kothanur, and Cebu KB (43), also residing in Kothanur. Another accused, Abilash, is currently absconding. The arrests followed a police raid at a restaurant in Bommanahalli after authorities received information about the alleged illegal sale of beef. During the inspection, police reportedly found evidence suggesting that beef was being sold without the required permissions. According to the complaint filed by a police constable attached to Avalahalli Police Station, he was on patrol duty in Bommenahalli village on Friday morning when he received information from an informant that beef was being served to customers at Aisiri Hub Kayaloram Hotel. **BMB**

For the sake of engagement, anything goes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and discipline due to the hyped fitness culture online. "The downside is the industry profits from making people feel inadequate as the cycle of endless comparison takes over. The pressure can drive people towards steroid use, misinformation, overtraining and obsessive self optimisation," said Tamra, highlighting that muscular bodies, low body fat, expensive gym wear, supplements and 'grindset' lifestyles are frequently presented as markers of superiority or achievement.

The pressure to appear perfect continues to exhaust young women. Sneha Mallesh, a law student from St Joseph's College of Law, shares that social media has normalised unrealistic beauty standards and has overly hyped 'perfect lifestyles' to the point that ordinary moments have very little significance or sometimes could feel performative too. "Even posting stories or pictures feels stressful because there's always fear of judgement. Most people only post their best moments, including me, but constantly seeing that makes others feel like they are falling behind or not doing enough," said Mallesh.

She further explains that vulnerability online is often hidden behind reposts, memes and sarcasm instead of it being a direct expression of emotions. "It feels safer and less exposed to express emotions through memes or sarcastic comments. Humour has become a way to hide discomfort and avoid serious conversations. Being emotionally unavailable or detached is often portrayed as cool or funny," she said.

Another college student, Ronald, who closely monitors the social media impact on his own life, shares that online validation is deeply tied to one's identity and self worth. He notices snippets of the same in his surroundings and friend circles, further explaining that it is dangerously infecting everyone, and in turn drawing mental instability. "The online world is so intertwined with our daily lives that it's the first thing we check when we wake up. Being relevant in the real world now basically demands that you're relevant online," he said.

Ronald shares that social media expression revolves around performance, while it blindsides authenticity. "When engagement doesn't hit, it genuinely affects mental health. You start obsessing over what will resonate with the audience instead of just being yourself. We are more connected than ever, but we are also creating versions of ourselves that aren't always real," he added.

Lack of attention span, and the need to prove oneself to gain more views and likes, has built a certain pressure for creators in the space, as they now look into extremities to push chaotic humour for exaggerated reactions and engagement quotas.

Prank creator Arjun Gowda, whose character is popularly known as 'Peter Pan' on his account The_villian_arcc on Instagram, explained that his content style was inspired by foreign creators and 'brain rot humour', which has gained value and popularity amongst Gen Z as more such accounts doing pranks emerge across Bengaluru and the country after his initial prank reels set the stage. "People started liking it because it felt new and different. Sometimes I would create random chaotic content because Gen Z enjoys unpredictability," said Gowda.

In order to engage, Gowda explains that creators often rely on 'rage baiting', which is deliberately provoking reactions or escalating situations as exaggerated chaos pulls more likes. He also shares that one needs to take risks in order to make such type of content. "The content is entertaining but comes with a cost. I have been threatened and beaten during pranks -- once someone slapped me mid prank and broke my sunglasses," he added.

Bengaluru recorded 25 dowry death cases

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

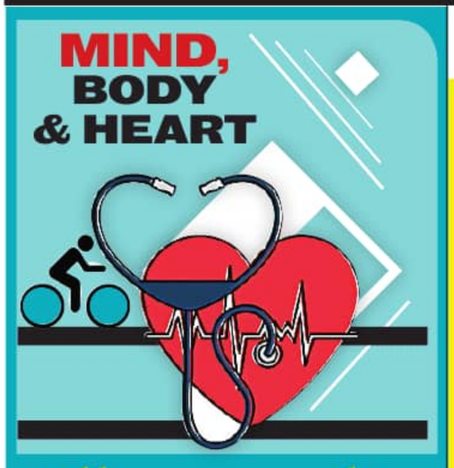
reported in 2024. The city further reported 173 cases under the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, adding to its overall women-related crime burden.

Advocates say the numbers reflect both increased awareness and gaps in protection systems. Bengaluru-based advocate Prateek Y said, "More women are coming forward to report domestic violence, but delays in investigation and relief continue to remain a concern in many cases."

Experts point to Bengaluru's rapid urbanisation, migration-driven growth, and rising cost of living as key factors adding pressure on households, often intensifying domestic disputes. At the same time, better access to police stations, women's helplines, and legal awareness is also likely contributing to higher reporting compared to smaller cities.

HEALTH TIP: Physical activity and adequate sleep/hydration are important factors for improving liver health over time

Sodas, processed juices, desserts, and high-fat/processed snacks can all contribute to storing excess fat in the liver



All you need to know about...

Obesity, diabetes high

Liftestyle diseases rise
India has witnessed a significant rise in obesity and high blood sugar levels among adults, according to findings from the National Family Health Survey-6 (NFHS-6), pointing to a growing burden of lifestyle-related diseases in the country.

Obese population
The survey found that 30.7 per cent of women aged 15-49 years were overweight or obese in 2023-24, up from 24 per cent in NFHS-5, which was conducted in 2019-21. In the same age group, the proportion of men found to be overweight or obese increased from 22.9 per cent to 27.3 per cent.

Blood sugar imbalance
The findings also showed a substantial rise in elevated blood sugar levels. Among women aged 15 years and above, the proportion with high or very high blood sugar levels, or those taking medicines to control blood sugar, rose from 13.5 per cent in NFHS-5 to 17.8 per cent in NFHS-6.

State wise
Among women aged 15-49 years, the highest prevalence of overweight or obesity was recorded in Puducherry at 46.3 per cent, followed by Chandigarh at 44 per cent, Delhi at 41.4 per cent, Punjab at 40.8 per cent, Tamil Nadu at 40.5 per cent and Andaman and Nicobar Islands at 38.1 per cent. In comparison, states such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Assam recorded comparatively lower obesity prevalence among women. Among men aged 15-49 years, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands recorded the highest prevalence of overweight or obesity at around 38 per cent, followed by Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Goa, all of which reported obesity prevalence of more than one-third among men.

—PTI

COOKING AS THERAPY

An elegant, intricate dessert with mango and a dal that tastes of cultural richness

RAMPURI DAL

INGREDIENTS
- ½ kg whole washed black gram (urad dal without husk)
- 1 litre water
- 30 ml refined oil
- 1 tbsp yellow butter
- Pinch of asafoetida (hing)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds (jeera sabut)
- 1 medium-sized onion, chopped
- 4 dry whole red chillies (sookhi lal mirch), halved
- 4 to 6 (1") pieces ginger, chopped
- 6 to 8 green chillies (hari mirch), chopped
- Salt, to taste
- 1 tsp chaat masala
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 50 g fresh coriander (dhaniya), chopped

METHOD
- Wash the dal thoroughly in running water.
- In a medium-size bowl, soak the dal in cold water, completely submerged, for 10 to 15 minutes. Drain the excess water and transfer it to a cooking pot over high heat. Add the water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 30 minutes until the dal softens.
- Heat the oil and butter in a wok over medium heat. Add the asafoetida, cumin seeds, and onion, and sauté until the onions turn light pink.
- Add the dry red chillies and ginger. Stir well and cook for another two to three minutes.
- Now add the boiled dal, green chillies, and season to taste with salt. Sprinkle the chaat masala, and add lemon juice and fresh coriander. Simmer over low heat for five minutes.
- Serve hot with roomali rotis.
- Tip: Serve this traditional black gram preparation from Rampur with roomali rotis.

(Excerpted by Femina with permission from Ammi's Kitchen: Heirloom Recipes From Rampur by Pernia Qureshi (Roli Books, Rs 1,995)

MANGO MILK CHOCOLATE ENTREMET

GREDIENTS

Mango Egg Yolk Cream
- 1.3 leaves platinum grade gelatine
- 20 ml cold water
- 250 gm mango puree
- 10 gm lime juice (about ½ lime)
- 6 egg yolks
- 40 gm sugar
- 80 gm butter (softened)

METHOD
- Bloom gelatine by soaking it in cold water for 5 minutes.
- Bring mango puree and lime juice to a boil.
- Beat egg yolks and sugar until pale and fluffy.
- Temper it by slowly pouring the hot mango mixture into the yolks while whisking continuously.
- Cook: Return mixture to low heat and cook until it thickens and reaches 82°C (custard consistency).
- Remove from heat and stir in bloomed gelatine until dissolved.
- Let the mixture cool to about 40°C.
- Mix softened butter until smooth.
- Pour into moulds and freeze for at least 4 hours.

Mango Mousse
- 1.5 sheets gelatine
- 20 ml water
- 145 gm white chocolate
- 55 gm lemon juice (juice of 2 lemon)
- 65 gm mango puree
- 260 ml double cream

METHOD
- Bloom the gelatine by soaking it in cold water for 5 minutes.
- Gently melt white chocolate using microwave or double boiler method.
- Warm mango puree and lemon juice (do not boil).
- Add bloomed gelatine to the warm fruit mixture and stir until dissolved.
- Pour the fruit mixture over melted chocolate and mix until smooth.
- Whip double cream to soft peaks.
- Once the chocolate mixture cools to lukewarm, gently fold in the whipped cream.
- Pour mousse over frozen insert/layers and return to freezer to set.

Coconut Joconde
- 70 g ground almonds
- 75 g desiccated coconut
- 70 g powdered sugar
- 2 whole eggs
- 2 egg whites
- Pinch of salt
- 20 g sugar
- 20 g flour
- 15 g melted butter

METHOD
- Prepare by preheating the oven to 200°C and line a baking tray.
- Combine ground almonds, desiccated coconut, and powdered sugar.
- Mix in whole eggs and beat until smooth and slightly fluffy.
- In a separate bowl, whip egg whites with salt. Gradually add sugar and whip to soft peaks.
- Fold whipped whites gently into the almond mixture.
- Fold in flour, then melted butter.
- Spread evenly on tray and bake for 8–12 minutes until lightly golden.
- Let cool and cut to desired shape.

Mango Mirror Glaze
- 2 2/3 sheets gelatine
- 45 ml cold water
- 45 g mango puree
- 60 g sugar
- 100 g glucose syrup
- 75 g double cream
- 100 g white chocolate
- Yellow + Red food coloring
- Desiccated coconut

METHOD
- Soak gelatine in cold water for 5 minutes.
- In a saucepan, heat mango puree, sugar, and glucose syrup until dissolved and just simmering.
- Stir in double cream and heat gently.
- Remove from heat and mix in bloomed gelatine.
- Pour hot mixture over white chocolate and blend until smooth.
- Add yellow and a tiny amount of red coloring to achieve mango color.
- Let glaze cool to 30–35°C (pouring consistency).
- Pour over a fully frozen cake placed on a rack.
- Finish with desiccated coconut.

Assemble the Cake
- (Use a silicone mould for best results)
- For the first layer, pour a layer of mango mousse into the mould (about halfway).
- Remove frozen mango egg yolk cream and place it in the center.
- Add more mousse to cover the insert completely.
- For the base layer, place the coconut joconde disc on top (this will become the bottom when flipped).
- Level it by pressing gently to remove air gaps.
- Freeze the entire cake for at least 6–8 hours or overnight until completely solid.

Mango Mirror Glaze
- Prepare the glaze and cool it to 30–35°C.
- Remove frozen cake from mould and place on a wire rack.
- Pour glaze evenly over the cake in one smooth motion.
- Let excess drip off.

Final Decoration
- Carefully transfer cake to a serving plate.
- Decorate with desiccated coconut (edges or base).
- Optional: add fresh mango pieces or coconut flakes for a premium finish.

Thawing & Serving
- Let the cake thaw in the refrigerator for 4–6 hours before serving.
- Serve chilled for best texture (creamy mousse + soft insert).

Shared by Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai, Femina

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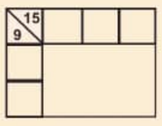
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



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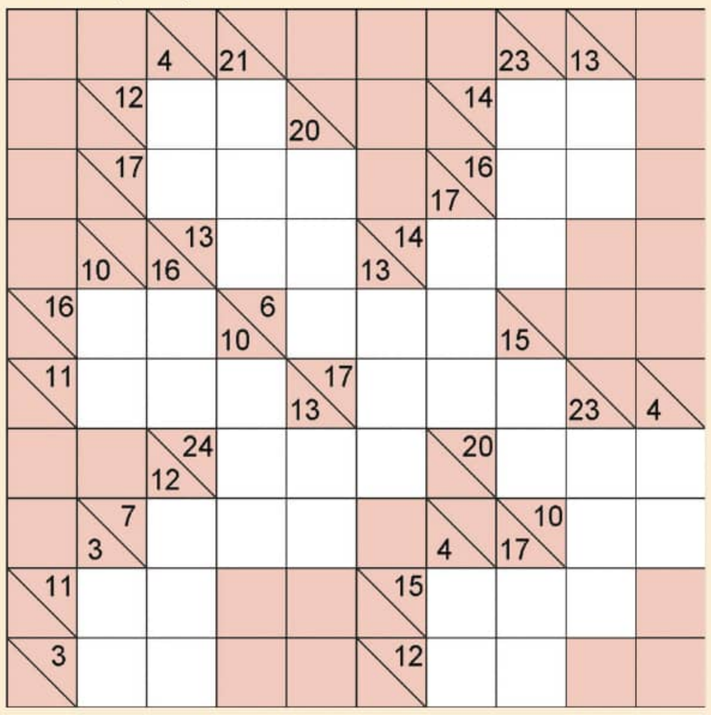

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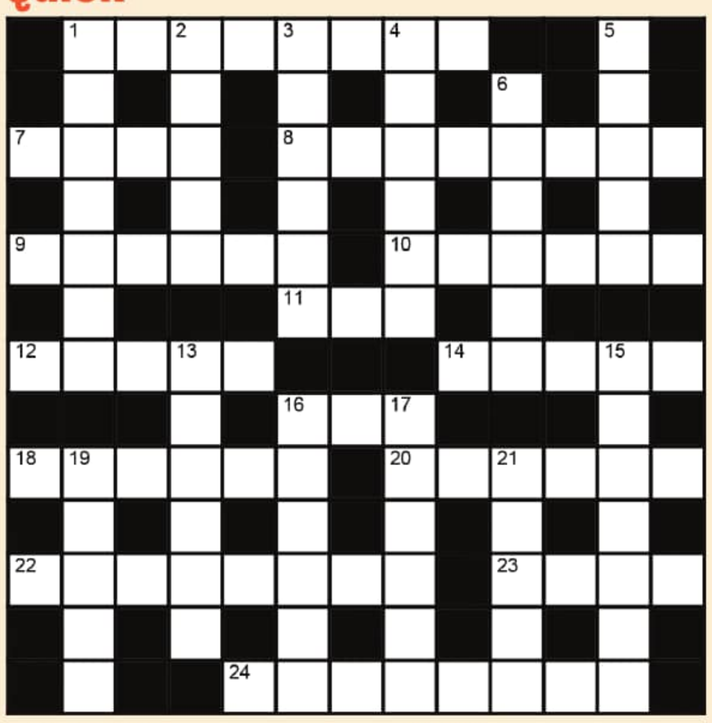


ACROSS

1 Capital of Sudan (8)
7 Peruvian Indian (4)
8 Enigmatic aura (8)
9 Bizet's famous opera (6)
10 Took a chance (6)
11 Golly! (3)
12 Swampland (5)
14 A skin disease of dogs (5)
16 Brother of Kush (3)
18 A blank space or a missing part (6)
20 Small refrigerator? (6)
22 Edible snail (8)
23 Obtains or procures (4)
24 Raised to a higher position (8)

DOWN

1 Official language of Karnataka (7)
2 Frighten (5)
3 Clocking (6)
4 Diffident or uncertain (6)
5 A small rodent (5)
6 Festival (6)
13 Narrow escape (6)
15 Crowed (7)
16 Bigger (6)
17 Injured party (6)
19 Something of benefit (5)
21 VIII for Virgil (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: P EQUALS U

W XCJJ QIP, WX WH CGHWCF XI TPWJO G KFGMO IBCFG IF G DWXQ DCMXCF XZGM XI TPWJO G BCFHIMGJ ZIPHC.

Linemaro

You are driving me crazy, so give me your keys

Mindchow

What makes lovers never tire of one another is that they talk always about themselves

Joke of the day

There is no room for amateurs... even in crossing the streets

Loop

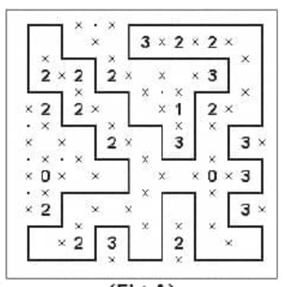
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

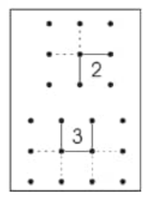
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

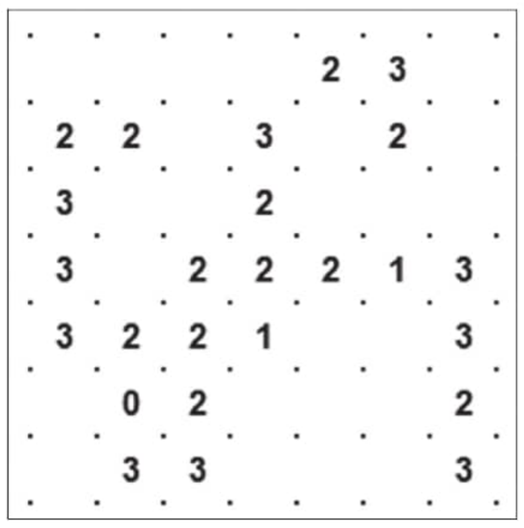
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



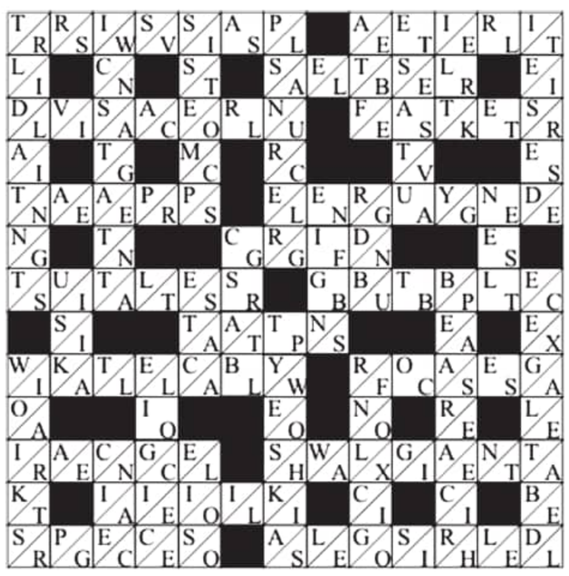
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6	Y			
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

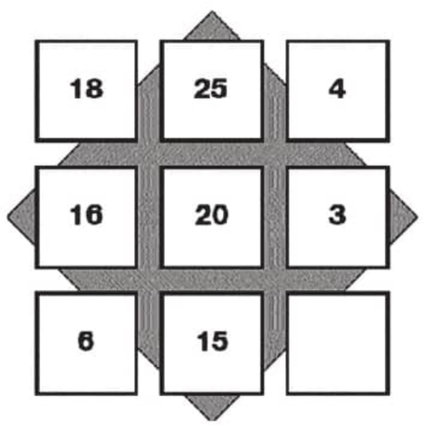
1 Harps; 6 Bercy; 7 A cape; 8 CE Rec; 9 Pro in

DOWN

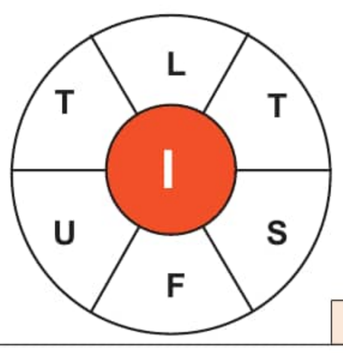
1 Scrap; 2 Pry he; 3 I a cab; 4 E croc; 5 Nee PR

Mensapuzzle

Which number replaces the blank and completes the sequence?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

08 Average; **09** Good; **11** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	8	7		3		2	4	
		5				7		
3			1		8			9
	2		6	4	9		1	
	6		7	8	5		9	
5			4		1			7
		6				4		
	9	4		5		1	8	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 4

3 4 6 9

Medium = 3

2 3 6 6

Hard = 18

2 3 6 6

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

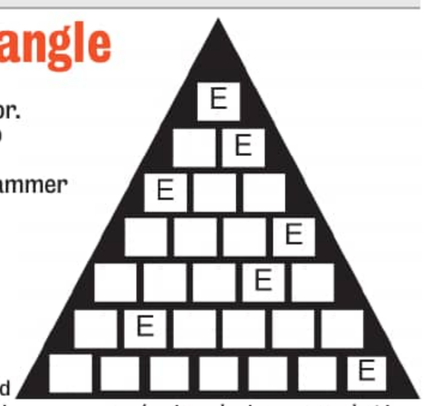
Differences: 1. File cabinet is taller. 2. Phone is different. 3. Earring is different. 4. Diploma is higher. 5. Tie is thinner. 6. Man's knee is not showing.

Riddler

Some anagrams are almost too good to be true. The letters in the capitalised words or phrases can be rearranged in delightful ways to fill the gaps! 1. The _____ Church can be BEST IN PRAYER. 2. The school bully gave his victim NINE THUMPS as a _____. 3. Someone with BAD CREDIT can still manage to pay with a _____.

Alpha triangle

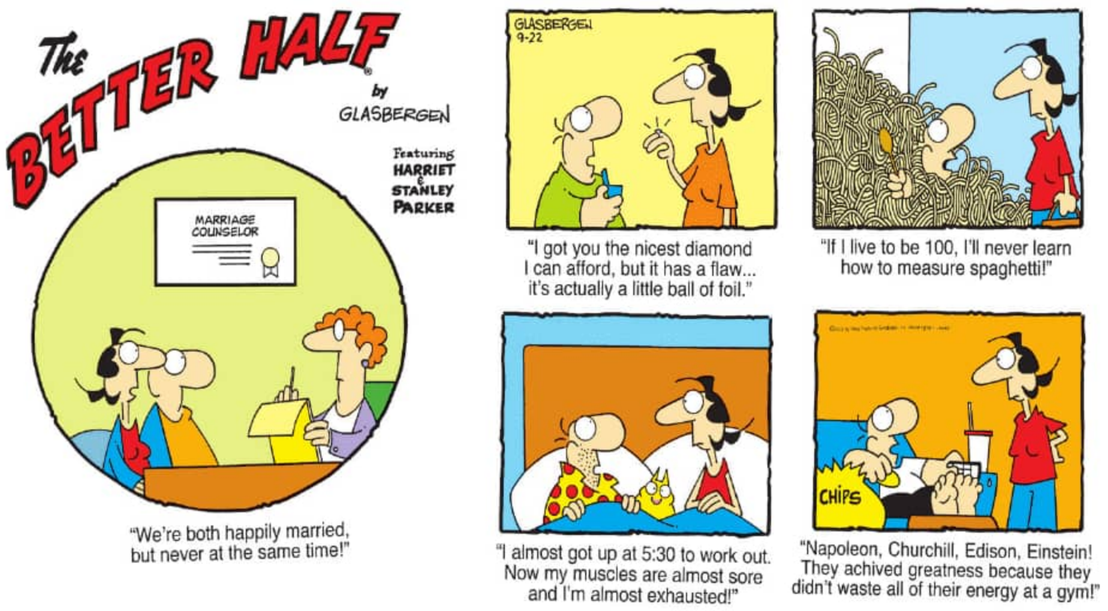
1 Second vowel
2 Common Era, abbr.
3 Novelist Umberto
4 Central part
5 Computer programmer
6 Tape
7 Rust

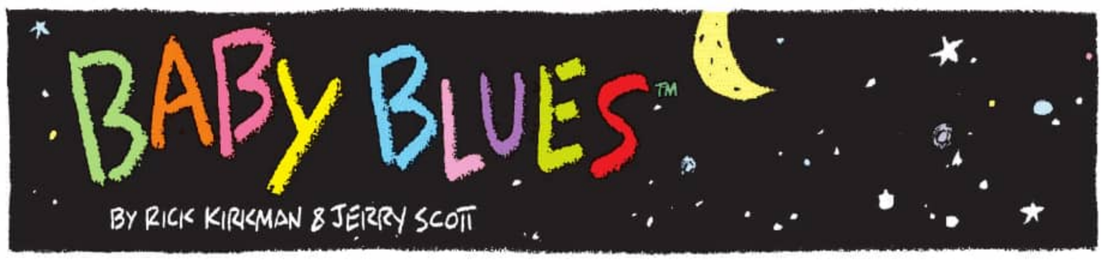


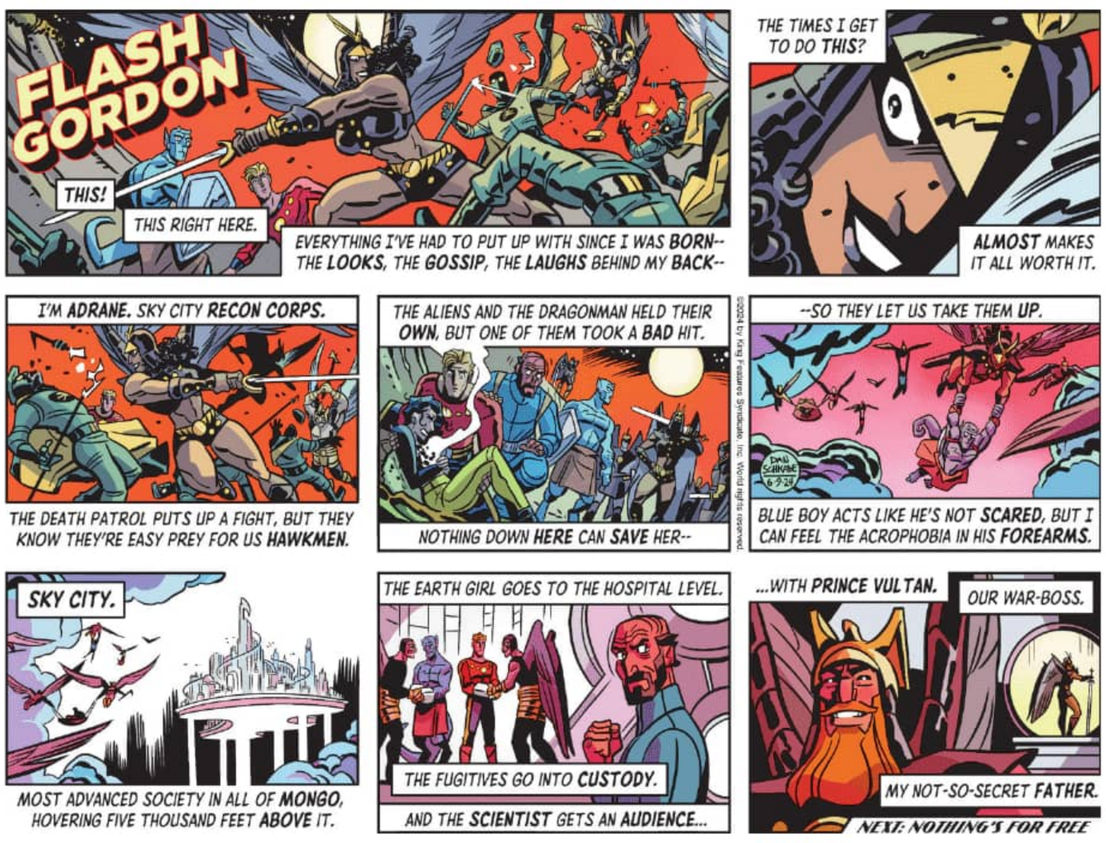
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

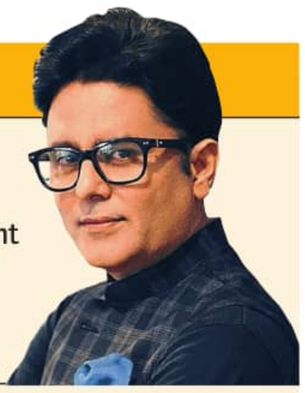

The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
Featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
MARRIAGE COUNSELOR
"We're both happily married, but never at the same time!"
GLASBERGEN 9-22
"I got you the nicest diamond I can afford, but it has a flaw... it's actually a little ball of foil."
"If I live to be 100, I'll never learn how to measure spaghetti!"
"I almost got up at 5:30 to work out. Now my muscles are almost sore and I'm almost exhausted!"
CHIPS
"Napoleon, Churchill, Edison, Einstein! They achived greatness because they didn't waste all of their energy at a gym!"




FLASH GORDON
THIS!
THIS RIGHT HERE.
EVERYTHING I'VE HAD TO PUT UP WITH SINCE I WAS BORN-- THE LOOKS, THE GOSSIP, THE LAUGHS BEHIND MY BACK--
THE TIMES I GET TO DO THIS?
ALMOST MAKES IT ALL WORTH IT.
I'M ADRANE. SKY CITY RECON CORPS.
THE DEATH PATROL PUTS UP A FIGHT, BUT THEY KNOW THEY'RE EASY PREY FOR US HAWKMEN.
THE ALIENS AND THE DRAGONMAN HELD THEIR OWN, BUT ONE OF THEM TOOK A BAD HIT.
NOTHING DOWN HERE CAN SAVE HER--
--SO THEY LET US TAKE THEM UP.
BLUE BOY ACTS LIKE HE'S NOT SCARED, BUT I CAN FEEL THE ACROPHOBIA IN HIS FOREARMS.
SKY CITY.
MOST ADVANCED SOCIETY IN ALL OF MONGO, HOVERING FIVE THOUSAND FEET ABOVE IT.
THE EARTH GIRL GOES TO THE HOSPITAL LEVEL.
THE FUGITIVES GO INTO CUSTODY.
AND THE SCIENTIST GETS AN AUDIENCE...
...WITH PRINCE VULTAN.
OUR WAR-BOSS.
MY NOT-SO-SECRET FATHER.
NEXT: NOTHING'S FOR FREE

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR



If it's your birthday today

This year is about culmination and legacy. You are finishing a major cycle and preparing for the next. Reflect on your achievements and decide what you want to carry forward. Mentoring a younger person brings deep satisfaction. Your wisdom is your gift to the world; share it generously. Endings this year are simply precursors to a very bright beginning.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Social energy surges, making this an ideal night for a gathering. Reconnect with old friends and share stories. Laughter serves as a powerful tonic for your soul's ultimate well-being.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
The month ends on a high note of domestic bliss. Surround yourself with familiar scents and favourite textures. You are safe, loved, and exactly where you are meant to be.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Communication is your superpower as May concludes. Reach out to someone you've been thinking about. A simple message brings a sense of connection and sets a positive tone for June.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Emotional clarity is your gift today. Reflect on the lessons of the past month and look forward to the future with hope. You are ready for a brand new beginning.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Your natural charisma is irresistible. Use your charm to bring people together and celebrate the end of a successful month. Your warmth and enthusiasm are contagious to everyone you meet.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
A sense of peace and satisfaction fills your heart. You've worked hard this month, and it shows. Take some time to relax and enjoy the fruits of your dedicated labour.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Focus on your relationships as the month ends. Show your appreciation for the people who support you. Small gestures of kindness strengthen your bonds and bring joy to your heart.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Intensity gives way to a sense of calm. You've navigated the challenges of May with strength and grace. Take a deep breath and prepare for the new opportunities of June.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Optimism is your guiding light as you look toward the future. Believe in yourself and your ability to achieve your dreams. The universe is supporting your journey every single step.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Professional success is a reality. Celebrate your achievements and look forward to the new challenges of June. Your hard work and dedication have paid off in a very big way.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Your humanitarian spirit is highlighted. Find a way to make a positive impact in your community. Your dedication to the greater good is an inspiration to everyone around you today.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Prioritise your physical stamina today by establishing a better sleep routine. Discipline in your daily habits provides the grounding you need to tackle the ambitious goals arriving with next month.

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Prajin, Bengaluru

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SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M = [{-96/-4}^3-(-11)]×(-6)+(-6)
= [{13,824+11}×(-6)-6
= [13,835]×(-6)-6
= [-83,010] -6 = - 83,016

STRIKE OUT

T	R	I	V	I	A	L	■	A	T	I	L	T
I	N	■	T	■	A	L	T	E	R	■	I
D	I	S	C	E	R	N	■	E	S	K	E	R
I	■	T	■	M	■	C	■	T	■	■	E	■
N	E	A	R	S	■	E	N	G	A	G	E	D
■	■	■	G	R	I	N	■	■	■	■	E	■
S	U	T	L	E	R	■	B	U	B	B	L	E
■	S	■	■	T	A	P	S	■	E	■	X	■
W	A	L	L	A	B	Y	■	F	O	S	S	A
O	■	■	O	■	■	O	■	E	■	■	L	■
R	A	N	G	E	■	S	A	L	I	E	N	T
K	■	A	I	O	L	I	■	■	C	■	E	■
S	P	E	C	S	■	S	L	O	S	H	E	D

QUICK

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	T
■	■	■	■	P	R	O	M	O	T	E	D
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	E	■
■	■	■	■	■	K	■	E	■	■	■	■
E	S	C	A	R	G	O	T	■	G	E	T	S
S	■	E	■	R	■	C	■	I	■	■	A	■
L	A	C	U	N	A	■	I	C	E	B	O	X
■	■	■	■	O	■	■	L	U	■	■	■	■
M	A	R	S	H	■	■	M	A	N	G	E	■
■	■	■	■	D	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
C	A	R	M	E	N	■	R	I	S	K	E	D
N	■	■	R	■	I	■	U	■	E	■	S	■
I	N	C	A	■	M	Y	S	T	I	Q	U	E
A	■	L	■	I	■	N	■	F	■	O	■	■
K	H	A	R	T	O	U	M	■	■	M	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE

3. Working in columns, subtract the middle number from the top number and multiply by 3 to give the bottom value.

QUOTE UNCODE

I tell you, it is easier to build a grand opera or a city center than to build a personal house.

SUDOKU

2	9	4	3	5	7	1	8	6
1	7	6	8	9	2	4	5	3
5	3	8	4	6	1	9	2	7
4	6	1	7	8	5	3	9	2
8	5	9	2	1	3	6	7	4
7	2	3	6	4	9	8	1	5
3	4	2	1	7	8	5	6	9
6	1	5	9	2	4	7	3	8
9	8	7	5	3	6	2	4	1

ALPHA TRIANGLE

E, CE, Eco, Core, Coder, Record, Corrode.

GO FIGURE

6 - 9 + 4 + 3 = 4
Easy
6 + 3 x 2 / 6 = 3
Medium
6 - 3 + 6 x 2 = 18
Hard

LOOP

KAKURO

FAST FIVE

S	H	A	R	P
C	Y	B	E	R
A	P	A	C	E
R	E	C	C	E
P	R	I	O	N

RIDDLER

1. Presbyterian,
2. Punishment,
3. Debit Card

BULL'S EYE

fist, nit, FLUTIST, iift, list, sift, silt, slit, stilt, suit, tilt

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Movies

Take a step back

After netizens perceive awkwardness in interaction, stars clear the misunderstanding with fun

With 'Cocktail 2' set to release on June 19, the film has been making headlines for reasons beyond its trailer. A viral clip from the music launch event sparked debate over an awkward moment between leads Shahid Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna, but the two have now put speculation to rest with a lighthearted exchange.

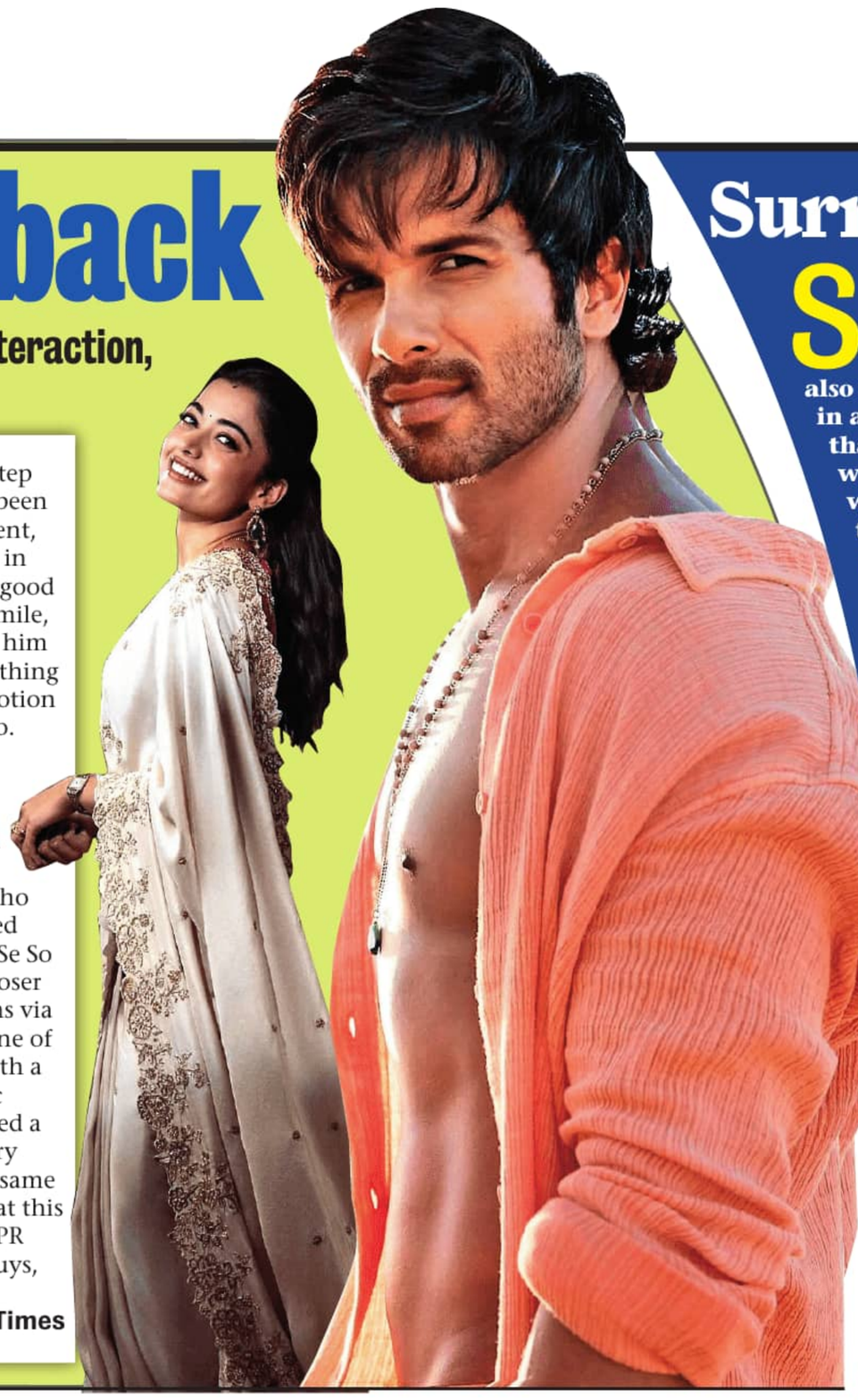
At the 'Cocktail 2' music launch in Mumbai, a brief moment during a paparazzi pose set social media ablaze. Shahid was seen placing his hand on Rashmika's shoulder, after which she quickly stepped back. The clip spread rapidly online, with many viewers debating whether Rashmika appeared uncomfortable. Neither actor addressed the moment publicly at the time.

On Friday, the 'Cocktail 2' trio reunited for promotional duties, and Shahid wasted no time in addressing the elephant in the room, in the most playful way possible. While posing together, he took a mock step back, mirroring what had been made of the original incident, leaving co-star Kriti Sanon in splits. Rashmika took it in good spirit, responding with a smile, and could be heard telling him that she did not mean anything by it, putting to rest any notion of tension between the two.

Plagiarism row

In a separate controversy, the film's recently released track 'Mashooqa' came under fire from netizens who alleged its melody was lifted from a 1993 Italian song, 'Se So Arrubate A Nonna'. Composer Pritam addressed the claims via Instagram. "Every single one of my song releases comes with a set of self-appointed music detectives, who have created a new genre called 'imaginary similarities'. Same people, same 'inspired by' thesis...Boss, at this point, you are my unpaid PR team...I just want to say, guys, NOT NICE," he wrote.

— ETimes



Surreal experience

Soniya Bansal marked a major milestone in her career as her short film The Last Breath was screened at the Cannes Film Festival market screenings. The actress also made her red carpet debut, turning heads in a pink lehenga-saree by designer Dolly J that blended traditional Indian elegance with contemporary style. The Last Breath, which also stars Shiv Thakare, highlights the issue of deforestation and environmental conservation.

Speaking about the project, Soniya said, "The Last Breath is very close to my heart because it carries an important environmental message. Cinema has the power to inspire awareness and change, and I'm proud to be associated with a story that speaks about protecting nature."

Reflecting on her Cannes debut, she shared, "Walking the red carpet at Cannes for the first time feels surreal. I wanted to stay rooted in Indian culture while presenting something timeless and graceful on an international stage."

The screening introduced the film to international buyers, distributors and festival programmers, helping bring global attention to its environmental message..

—ETimes

Dark side of the moon

Karisma Kapoor is drawing strong attention for her intense new look in the trailer of 'Brown.' The actor appears in a raw, stripped down role that moves away from glamour, placing her in a darker, more emotional space. Fans have praised her transformation into Rita Brown, a damaged, gritty character whose pain, anger, and vulnerability drive the trailer. The response shows how strongly audiences still connect with Karisma as she takes on a layered OTT role.

The trailer of 'Brown' was shared on Instagram, where fans reacted to Karisma Kapoor's performance and screen presence. Many viewers called it her "never-before-seen avatar," while others praised her for choosing a role that looks intense, unpolished, and emotionally demanding.

The trailer presents Karisma in a sharp departure from the roles that made her a household name. She appears with weary eyes, a rugged look, and a controlled heaviness that shapes the show's mood. The character does not rely on gloss or star appeal. Instead, the trailer places Rita Brown in moments of stress, pain, and collapse.

Karisma's performance has become the main talking point online. Viewers have pointed to her emotional breakdowns, pill-popping scenes, and quiet moments of vulnerability as signs of a bold shift.

—ETimes

Femme fatale

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt will be seen playing a killer in 'Alpha', raised and trained to kill.

News about her character in the upcoming Yash Raj Films' entertainer Alpha was doing the rounds on social media. However, a source close working with the production confirmed to IANS: "Alia Bhatt is definitely playing a killer in Alpha."

"She isn't like the goody good heroes that the YRF Spy Universe has introduced so far and is, in fact, as assassin who has been raised and trained to kill. She isn't a spy. She is an alpha killer," said the source

As per the source, YRF head honcho Aditya Chopra wanted to give a new, cool hero "who shouldn't be judged for her actions but should be seen as someone who will do as she pleases."

The source added: This is a very today's way of looking at protagonists because people want to see exciting, entertaining protagonists on screen. Alia's character in Alpha will do just that!" "With Alpha, Aditya Chopra is taking a very unconventional approach to build a hero. This is a creative pivot for the YRF Spyverse..." **—IANS**

AI, no thank you

Hollywood star Emily Blunt says she chose to record the inhuman, alien clicking and breathing sounds in her upcoming film "Disclosure Day" herself instead of relying on Artificial Intelligence, as she is terrified of it.

Blunt features in Steven Spielberg's film, which is set to release in theatres on June 12. It is produced by Universal Pictures.

The actor, who recently featured in "The Devil Wears Prada 2", said an extra microphone was placed near her throat while recording. She was initially given a choice by the filmmaker to use AI.

"Even kind of leading up to that moment where she starts speaking in this non-human language...It's a four-minute oner that we shot that leads up to that moment, where she's gradually sort of disintegrating," she said at the Hot Ones talk show.

"There are various ways you could do it. You could go the AI route, which I'm a bit terrified of. I thought I could make some real, really strange sounds. So, I said, 'Maybe I could come in, and we'll just do a range of weird sounds.' And it's what we did. I did sort of the clicking sounds. I did sort of humming sounds, consonant sounds, breathing-strange sounds," she added. The film revolves around individuals who uncover top-secret government intelligence revolving around extraterrestrial life and race to reveal the truth about alien existence to the world. **—PTI**